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Least qualified adults miss out on job-boosting training and education

# Least qualified adults miss out on job-boosting training and education

Low educational attainment, age, sex and employment status can all be barriers to accessing adult education or training.

10 January 2019

Some of the most vulnerable members of society have the least access to the training and learning that could help boost their career prospects, ONS analysis has shown.

Adults with the lowest levels of educational attainment are among those missing out on the opportunity to improve their life chances, the analysis of the [Adult Education Survey 2016](#) has revealed.

## Obstacles to learning or training

Personal reasons such as lack of confidence were the main blockers for

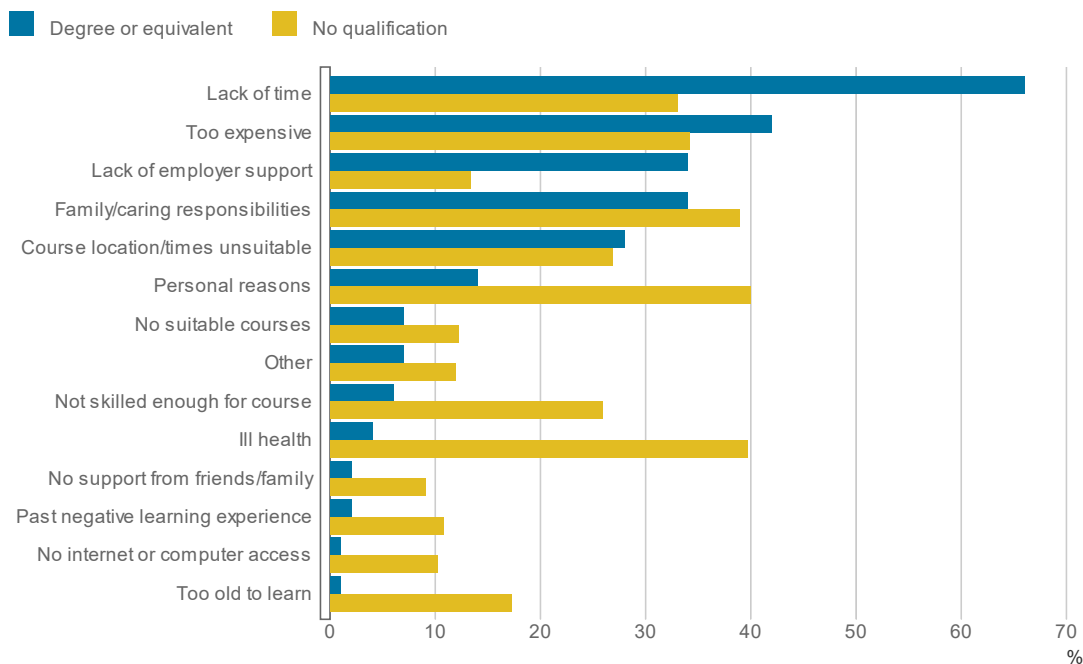
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lack of time as the biggest obstacle.

## Barriers to learning or training by educational attainment



Source: [Adult Education Survey, 2016](#)

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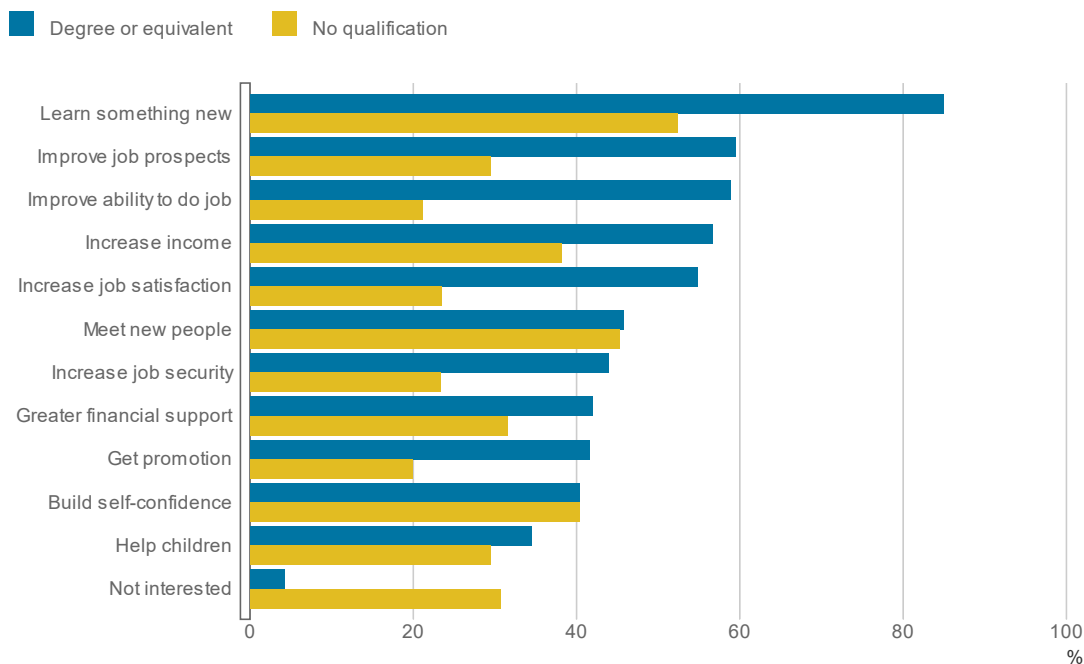
Those with 'dispositional barriers' such as lack of confidence, are most likely to be unemployed and from a disadvantaged background, such as those with low skills or educational attainment, according to the Learning and Work Institute report, [Barriers to learning for disadvantaged groups.](#)

In contrast, those more likely to be engaged in learning tended to be from higher socio-economic groups, the [Adult Participation in Learning Survey 2017](#) found. It also revealed that people in lower paid and lower skilled roles receive the least training in the workplace.

## Reasons for taking up learning or training

The Adult Education Survey 2016 found that those without qualifications tended to focus on education or training as a way of improving their wellbeing, whereas those at the other end of the educational spectrum, with degrees or equivalent, seemed more driven by improving their job prospects.

## Reasons that would encourage more learning or training in the future by highest educational attainment



Source: [Adult Education Survey, 2016](#)

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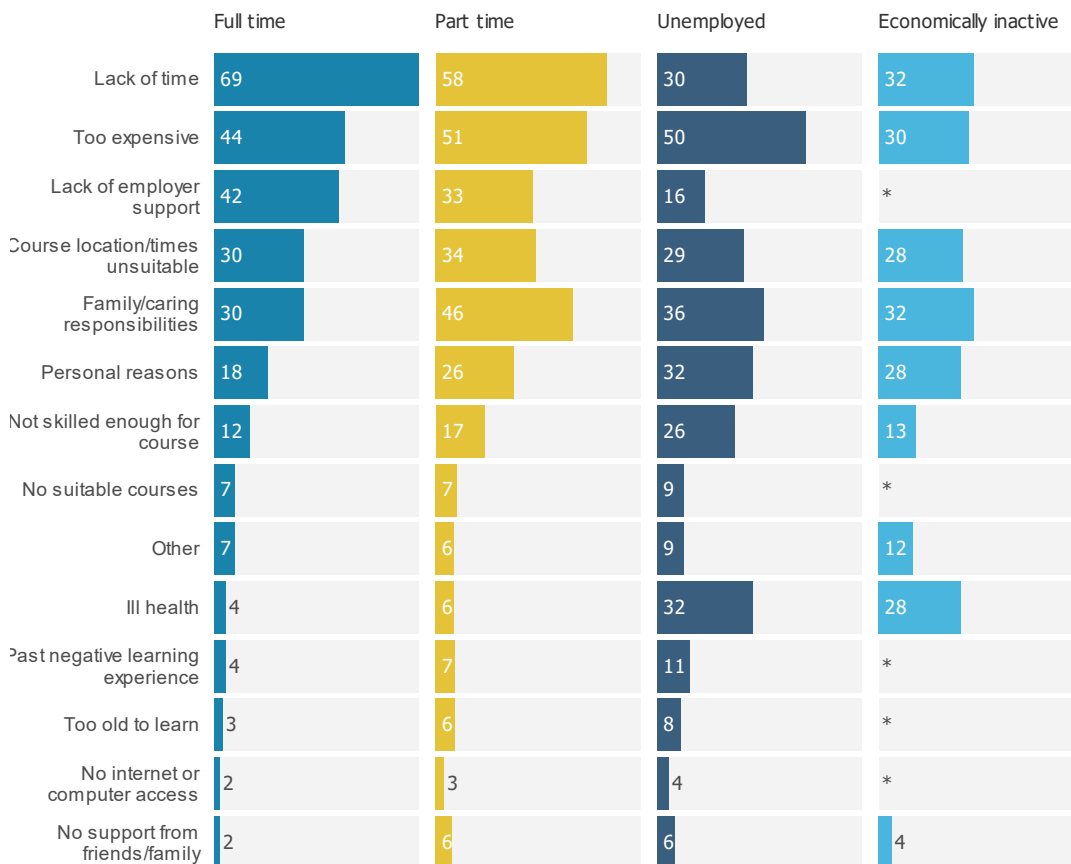
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## Employment status was a factor in differing approaches to taking up education or training

As well as educational attainment, the survey highlights the existence of other barriers such as age, sex and employment status.

Cost remained the largest barrier to half of unemployed people, followed by caring and/or family responsibilities, ill-health and lack of confidence. For those who are economically inactive, it was lack of time and caring and/or family responsibilities in equal measure.

### Barriers to education by employment status



Source: [Adult Education Survey, 2016](#)

\* Data suppressed due to small sample sizes

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## Differences between sexes

There were clear differences between men and women when reporting the barriers that prevented them from or encouraged them to take up training or education.

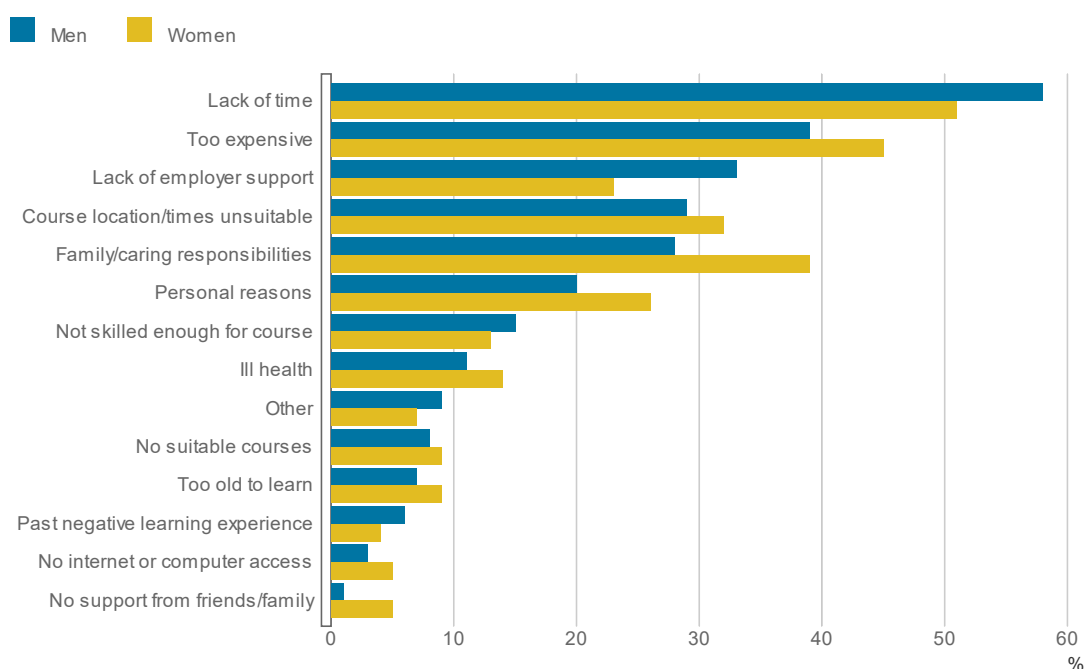
Men responded more to incentives that were job or pay-related while women tended to choose more personal reasons such as meeting new people and building confidence.

More women than men said family and/or caring responsibilities would cause difficulties. Personal reasons, such as a lack of confidence also showed themselves as an issue for a higher proportion of women than men.

One possible reason for this could be the [higher proportion of women who carry out household tasks](#). ONS time use data showed that women carried out an overall average of 60% more unpaid work than men.

The division between the sexes was also visible when it came to improving career potential. A higher proportion of men than women said an increased income would encourage further training and learning in the future and that their jobs and their ability to do them would be improved.

## Different barriers to education and training for women and men



Source: [Adult Education Survey, 2016](#)

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### Notes:

This survey, carried out by ONS for the Department for Education, spoke to people in England aged 19 and over who were not in continuous, full-time education or who had returned after a break of more than two years.

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